

New York State Severe Weather Awareness Week May 3rd to May 9th, 2009

Severe Weather Safety

Priscilla Nicosia
NOAA's National Weather Service
Binghamton NY



Severe Weather Safety

- Have a severe weather safety plan in mind *before* the event.
 - Plan where to meet.
 - Plan how to receive information.
 - Who will watch or listen?
 - Have a list of terms.
 - Have important phone numbers.



Severe Thunderstorm Safety

- Move inside a sturdy building at the first sound of thunder. It is especially important that outdoor sports events or other activities be delayed or postponed.
- If damaging straight-line winds are expected, move to an interior room on the lowest floor.
- Schools, large buildings, and homes are safe during severe thunderstorms.



Straight-line wind damage



www.tornadoexpress.com



NWS Lincoln, IL

When outside: Beware of hail shafts!



© 1996 Roger Edwards



Allan Detrich

Lightning Safety:

STAY AWAY FROM:

- Tall isolated objects (trees, poles, light posts, field goal posts)
- Wide-open areas, including sports fields, farm fields, and hiking trails
- Water related activities (boating, fishing, lying on the beach)
- Open vehicles like farm tractors, riding lawnmowers, golf carts etc.
- Unprotected buildings (picnic pavilions, rain shelters, bus stops, car ports, open garages, covered patios, dugouts)
- Metal (fences, bleachers, tools, golf clubs).
- Using the telephone and showers



Lightning: Bolt from the blue

Lightning often strikes outside of heavy rain and may occur as far as 10 miles away from any rain. More than 50% of lightning deaths occur AFTER the storm has passed.



© 1976 A. Moller



© Radek Dolecki

Flash Flood Safety

- At home:
 - If you live in a flood prone area, near waterways or in low areas, know your flood risk!
 - Know what the flood stage is at nearby waterways.
 - Know where you will go if heavy rains create a potential for flooding.
 - Have a source of weather information readily available, including a battery operated radio.

Flash Flood Safety

- Develop a Plan
 - If you live in a flood prone area, develop a Family Plan.

Plan where to meet other members of your family in the event of a flood, or other disaster. Designate the house of a friend or relative on high ground, a public building, or a neighbor.
 - Have a phone number of a relative out of the area that all could reach if you are separated.
- React Quickly. Do not hesitate to leave areas before evacuation routes become blocked. Never attempt to drive through flooded roadways!



Tornado Safety

- At home:
 - 1. Get to the basement under a sturdy piece of furniture.
 - 2. Got to an interior room or hallway, away from windows. The bathroom or closet may do.
 - 3. Get in the tub with a mattress.
- In Schools or High Rise Buildings
 - 1. Go to the basement.
 - 2. Go to the lowest floor hallway or interior room.
 - 3. Never use gymnasiums, cafeterias, or auditoriums. Roofs are subject to collapse.



Tornado Safety

- ✓ BEST SHELTER: Basement or Storm Cellar.
- ✓ Know where very heavy objects rest on the floor above. Get underneath a sturdy item such as a workbench.
- ✓ If there is no basement, go to a small interior room on the lowest floor, such as a closet, bathroom or hallway or under a stairway.
- ✓ Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside.
- ✓ Cover your body with blankets, pillows, etc.
- ✓ Stay away from windows and glass and cover your head!



Outdoor Tornado Safety

Flying debris from tornadoes causes the most injuries and fatalities!

- ✓ If you cannot avoid an oncoming tornado, seek shelter in a substantial building or ditch (but beware of flooding).
- ✓ Most tornadoes can destroy even tied-down mobile homes. If there is a sturdy building within easy running distance, seek shelter there. Otherwise, lie flat in a ditch or ravine away from trees and cars, which can be blown onto you. Cover your head with your hands to give yourself the best protection from flying debris.
- ✓ Do NOT take shelter under a highway overpass.



NOAA Weather Radio

- Special radio with an audio alarm that goes off whenever the National Weather Service issues a warning for your area.
- Could be a life saver someday!
- Especially at night when you are not apt to be on the computer, watching TV, or listening to the radio.



WATCH vs. WARNING

CAUTION

Watch the Sky

Watch- “Stand-by”

Conditions are favorable for severe weather in or near the watch area. Watches are issued for tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and flash floods. Issued by the Storm Prediction Center

DANGER

Take Cover Now

Warning- “Activated”

The severe weather event is imminent or occurring in the warned area. Warnings are issued for tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, flash floods and river flooding. Issued by NWS Binghamton for central New York and northeast Pennsylvania.